

Media Release

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INNOVATIVE IDEAS TO CREATE A HEALTHIER VICTORIA

An innovative idea that examines the way supermarkets can encourage healthy eating habits is one of three research projects being funded by VicHealth that have the potential to generate large health gains for the people of Victoria.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said the three successful research initiatives in this year's VicHealth Innovation Research Grants scheme would trial fresh ideas and develop evidence to help create a Victoria where everyone can enjoy better health.

"Our research funding is essential to providing opportunities to advance Victoria's population health by pre-empting and targeting improvements in health for everyone. These projects align with our work to prevent tobacco use, harm from alcohol, and promote healthy eating. They have the potential to help create a healthier Victoria – one where people enjoy a better quality of life with more opportunities for fulfilment and a long life," Ms Rechter added.

The three successful research initiatives are:

Creating supermarket food environments that encourage healthy eating - Dr Adrian Cameron & Dr Gary Sacks, Deakin University

This project will examine the impact of changes to in-store supermarket marketing and promotion strategies on the healthiness of food purchased. These supermarket-based interventions will include a financial evaluation to enable assessment of the impact on the retailer and to ensure that results are highly relevant to other settings. The project builds on strong existing relationships between retail and local government partners and senior researchers from the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention at Deakin University.

Vaporising smoking-related harms in people with severe and persistent mental illness: A study of the acceptability of vaporised nicotine products for smoking cessation or long term substitutes - Professor Jayashri Kulkarni – Monash University

Despite a large decline in smoking among the general adult Australian population, smoking prevalence among Australian adults with a severe and persistent mental illness remains high. A strong case has been made that more attention and resources should be directed to smokers with mental health conditions.

This project will provide important new data and approaches to reducing smoking-related harms in people with a severe and persistent mental illness. The results will also have relevance for public health policy if it is found that access to novel vaporised nicotine products (e.g. e-cigarettes) could benefit this group of people to reduce their smoking.

A mobile phone delivered intervention for reducing alcohol consumption - Dr Megan Lim – Burnet Institute

Risky drinking by young people is a significant public health issue in Australia with two-thirds (67%) of young Victorians aged 16-29 drinking at levels that put them at risk of injury from a single drinking occasion. With research showing that mobile phones and text messages have been successful in delivering health promotion messages and in engaging young people, this project will use mobile phones to deliver brief interventions to reduce alcohol consumption via SMS.

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